

**STATEMENT DELIVERED BY H. E. CHAD BLACKMAN, AMBASSADOR AND
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF BARBADOS IN GENEVA AT THE 54TH
MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL TRADE CENTRE'S JOINT ADVISORY
GROUP (JAG)**

25 NOVEMBER 2020

Madam Chair, H.E. Ms. Athaliah Lesiba Molokomme, (Botswana)
UNCTAD Secretary-General, Mr. Mukhisa Kituyi
WTO Deputy Director-General, Mr. Yonov Frederick Agah
ITC Executive Director, Ms. Pamela Coke-Hamilton,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

At the outset, Barbados wishes to congratulate you Madam Chair, on your appointment as Chair of the fifty-fourth session of the International Trade Centre's Joint Advisory Group (JAG). We look forward to working with you over the next year. Barbados would also wish to recognise the work of the delegation of Finland for their contribution as Chair over the previous year.

We would also wish to welcome the new Executive Director of the ITC, Ms Pamela Coke Hamilton. We have no doubt that her wealth of experience in working with in the area of development cooperation and SME promotion can only augur well for the organisation. On behalf of Government of Barbados, we wish Ms Coke Hamilton the very best and reiterate our continued support for the ITC.

Chair.

As a small island developing state where the impact of climate change threatens our continued existence and the way in which we trade, our food security and our livelihood, it is important for us to diversify, mitigate and adapt to new and sustainable economic sectors. Barbados has therefore taken particular note of the many achievements realised by the ITC over the last year, including but not limited to, the technical assistance and capacity building that has been provided to Barbados and the wider in the Caribbean region with regard to climate smart agriculture, particularly as it relates to the revitalising of the coconut industry.

There is no doubt that we are facing an unprecedented challenge, the likes of which this generation has never seen or experienced. It has highlighted the vulnerability of every country in the world, not least among them small island developing states, which have been identified as one of the groups that are being, and will continue to be disproportionately affected by the economic crisis emanating from the advent of COVID-19.

As countries seek to respond and recover from the economic impact of the crisis, it has been recognised that the efficiency and effectiveness of achieving such goals will be driven primarily

by the micro small and medium enterprise (MSME) sector. Given its competence and comparative advantage in this area, the relevance and therefore the need for the ITC has become even more greater and apparent, particularly as it relates to enhancing competitiveness of MSMEs and bringing SIDS economies back onto a positive growth trajectory.

The focused work of the ITC over the last few months has as a start, allowed us to monitor the impact of measures taken in the name of COVID 19 on ITC beneficiary countries and in particular the MSMEs in these jurisdictions. We therefore take note of the way in which the ITC has adapted to the meet these increased demands for its services and its intention to increase activities and deliverables to meet specific COVID-19 related needs, including in the areas of tourism, income generation and digitalisation for small, medium enterprises (SMEs) and strengthening governments to implement trade development strategies.

Chair.

In June, Barbados and other SIDS in Geneva released a joint statement and five-point action plan on trade and COVID-19. The action plan will focus on the following areas, not only as we seek to respond and recover from the economic impacts of the pandemic, but also as we seek to attain sustainable development:

- Firstly, foster the resilience and competitiveness of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and small farmers;
- Secondly, support Sustainable Investments in SIDS
- Thirdly, track and Analyse COVID-19 Temporary Trade Measures
- Fourthly, Promote Green Growth and MSME and small farmers Climate Resilience
- Fifth and lastly, jointly mobilize partners and resources

Barbados looks forward to our continued collaboration with the ITC and its Members in delivering on its 2021 programme, particularly as it relates to the rollout of the SIDS/ITC Five-Point Action Plan.

In closing, we would also like to thank the ITC for serving on the Commission on Trade and Development Options 2020 established by the Honourable Prime Minister of Barbados, Mia Mottley, in the UNCTAD 15 preparatory process. As the Host Country, we look forward to working towards a successful UNCTAD 15 with the ITC as a partner.

In concluding Madam Chair, Barbados wishes you a fruitful 54th meeting and wish the ITC all the best.

Thank you very much.

Permanent Mission of Barbados at Geneva

25 November 2020